

The Monroe Doctrine represented the first expansion of American policy in its vigorous assertion of America's right to ensure that no foreign power intervenes in our hemisphere. The last century saw a further expansion of American power as we acted to prevent any hostile power or ideology from dominating the eastern hemisphere and threatening our continued independence.

Today, we face a new challenge, a homicidal dictator striving to acquire the means to threaten our civilization and kill millions of our fellow Americans. Saddam Hussein already has the means; he only lacks the material needed to build an atomic bomb. It has been widely reported that he could build a bomb within a year were he to acquire certain materials. A nuclear armed Saddam Hussein would represent a clear and present danger to our nation.

No one who has objectively looked at the facts, no one who has seen the Kurdish villagers gassed on Saddam Hussein's order, no one who remembers the invasion and looting of Kuwait, no one looking at the facts can doubt that a nuclear Saddam Hussein would be a threat to our Nation and civilization.

Given these facts I think it is important we understand what we are debating today. We are not debating whether a nuclear Saddam Hussein is a threat. No honest analysis can deny that. We are not debating how to confront Saddam Hussein. No one wants war and it is my earnest hope that our actions today will convince Saddam Hussein that he must disarm and give up his goal of acquiring nuclear weapons. However, we can only succeed in avoiding war if Saddam Hussein is convinced that he risks war and the destruction of his regime if he continues to defy us.

What we are debating today is timing. Do we confront Saddam Hussein today or wait. Do we act now when he does not possess nuclear weapons or wait until he does. Common sense tells us that the risky course is to wait. Our responsibility as legislators dictates we act against any threat to our independence. Opponents of this resolution say the risks are too great and that there is too much that is unknown, but the risks of not acting are far greater and the unknown far more terrifying.

Let us remain true to previous generations of Americans who have been vigilant in protecting our freedom and vote for this resolution. Let us live up to the expectations set by the Founding Fathers and support this resolution.

Mr. HERGER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the resolution before us today. The principle purpose of the resolution is to authorize the use of military force—if deemed necessary—to remove Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq. The Hussein regime poses a direct threat to the security of the United States and our partners in the world. And this threat must not be allowed to stand.

In the aftermath of the Persian Gulf War, Saddam Hussein agreed to numerous United Nations Security Council resolutions—16 of them—as conditions of his political survival. Now, almost 12-years later, Iraq's leader has failed outright to comply with these terms of peace. Hussein has continued to stockpile weapons of mass destruction, subjected the people of Iraq to squalor and starvation, openly sponsored terrorist attacks, and has in all ways defied the international community. He has lied repeatedly and there is no doubt that he cannot be trusted.

Yet still, many wonder if Saddam's distant rogue regime is a real threat to our national security, and the safety of American citizens?

To answer this question we need look no further than the horrors of 9–11 and how terrorists from afar were able to strike at America. Hussein's hatred of our country has been made plain. Despite our best efforts at border security, it is conceivable that terrorists, sponsored by Hussein, might smuggle Iraqi weapons into the United States for use in an attack against our citizens.

Our intelligence reports confirm this threat as real. Iraq maintains an extensive stockpile of sophisticated chemical and biological weapons, and is continuing in its program to develop nuclear weapons and the means to deliver them. We also know that Iraq supports terrorist groups and encourages violence against Israel with cash payments to the families of suicide bombers. Under Hussein's regime, Iraq has become a new safe-harbor for al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups.

Just as we must vote to pass the resolution before us, so too must the United Nations reaffirm its importance in the global theater, approving the use of force against Iraq. As in the Gulf War, a unified coalition effort from the beginning would help foster consensus to rebuild Iraq and reconstitute a new Iraqi government following military action.

As we prepare for what may be an inevitable war scenario in Iraq, we must acknowledge the possible outcomes of such an action, both positive and negative.

Our objective would be to eliminate the threat posed by Hussein's regime, and thereby create a more stable political environment in the Middle East. Still, the decision to commit American troops to the battlefield is never easy. In addition, there are also other considerations, such as, if we are successful in our mission, what happens next? What kind of force will it take to successfully see through a transition in Iraq and foster a new democracy?

While these possibilities must be considered when weighing any action, the immediate issue is clear: Iraq is a threat that must be dealt with swiftly.

I firmly believe that our President will make the right decision, in the best interest of the United States, and I have the utmost confidence in the integrity of his counsel. Mr. Speaker—at times we must be willing to use force to protect the security of our people and of our Nation.

Now is one of those times.

I would like to thank my colleagues in the House for introducing this strong resolution, and would like to urge all to stand by the President and vote for its passage.

Mr. GREENWOOD. Mr. Speaker, more than 200 years ago, the first President of the United States addressed the Nation's first Congress with these prophetic words, "the preservation of the sacred fire of liberty and the destiny of the Republican model of government are . . . finally, staked on the experiment entrusted to the hands of the American people."

Now we find ourselves in a new century, confronted by new trials.

We have withstood attempts at invasion, survived a bloody civil war, endured two world wars and prevailed in the long twilight struggle President Kennedy spoke of more than forty years ago.

Ten years ago, confronted by the specter of Kuwait brutally overrun by Iraqi forces, the

United Nations and the United States led a coalition of more than 28 nations in a war of liberation.

Then President Bush plainly outlined our war aims. "Our objectives" he said "are clear. Saddam Hussein's forces will leave Kuwait. The legitimate Government of Kuwait will be restored. . . . and Kuwait will once again be free." All of this was achieved.

He then went on to say that once peace was restored, it was our Nation's hope, "that Iraq will live as a peaceful and cooperative member of the family of nations." this hope has gone unfulfilled.

And so, in Franklin Roosevelt's words, "there has come a time, in the midst of swift happenings, to pause for a moment and take stock—to recall what our place in history has been, and to rediscover what we are and what we may be. There is no greater example of what we are than how we responded to the terrible events of September 11.

Confronted with a massacre of innocent lives; the attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, and the horror of the instruments of modern technology being used as the means of our destruction, we did not falter.

In the weeks and months since, we have buried our dead, cared for our wounded, aided the widows and orphans, improved our defenses and taken the war to our enemy.

Now we are asked to do more.

Over the past few months, I have agonized, along with many of my neighbors and constituents, on the degree of threat the renegade regime in Iraq represents to our safety and security.

It is for these and other reasons that I set the bar so high on what I would require before I would embrace any presidential action that included the use of force to remove Hussein and his henchmen from power.

The most compelling reason, as I wrote to my constituents was the realization that, "any decision to finally remove Hussein and his regime, once begun, could not be permitted to fail.

For those reasons, I urged the administration to work to promote a regime change short of the use of the military option.

I went on to argue that, should those efforts fail, then it was incumbent upon the administration to make their case to the United Nations, to the American people and to Congress before inaugurating any major military undertaking against Iraq.

This they have done. Now it is time for us to decide. I will vote "yes" on this resolution.

While I still hold out some hope that by its passage the United Nations will be empowered, to force Iraq to comply with the will of the international community, that they eliminate all their weapons of mass destruction, I bear too great a responsibility to allow my actions to be governed by that hope alone.

As a Member of Congress, I must act upon information I possess in a way that most clearly protects our people and our way of life. And what I know is this. Should the U.N. fail in its mission, we will have very little choice but to act.

I am now persuaded that, left to his own devices, Saddam Hussein will not be content until he has the means to murder his own people and the people of many nations with the most horrible weapons of war. This we cannot permit.

Neither can we permit him to cause the kind of world economic blackmail and chaos that